



**Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan 2020**  
**Submitted to the Center for Tech & Civic Life**  
**June 15, 2020**

The State of Wisconsin found itself in the midst of an historic election in April of 2020 when statewide elections occurred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. These elections included not only the presidential preference vote, but also local races for city councils, county boards, school board, and mayors, a statewide election for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and numerous district-wide school referenda.

Municipalities were required to make rapid and frequent adjustments to ensure compliance with the rapidly changing Supreme Court, Wisconsin Supreme Court, and Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) rulings about the election. (The April 2020 Election may go down in history as the only election in which the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court weighed in on the same day on how the election would be conducted.)

The shifting legal landscape was also complicated by the extraordinary lengths municipal clerks went to to ensure that both voting and election administration were done in accordance with prevailing public health requirements.

As mayors in Wisconsin's five biggest cities - Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, and Racine - we seek to work collaboratively on the two remaining 2020 elections (August 11th and November 3rd) to: safely administer elections to reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus for our residents as well as our election officials and poll workers; identify best practices; innovate to efficiently and effectively educate our residents about how to exercise their right to vote; be intentional and strategic in reaching our historically disenfranchised residents and communities; and, above all, ensure the right to vote in our dense and diverse communities.

**Table 1: Summary of Municipalities' Electorate Data, June 2020**

	Green Bay	Kenosha	Madison	Milwaukee	Racine
<b>Estimated Eligible Voters</b>	71,661	73,000	213,725	430,000	56,000
<b>Registered Voters</b>	52,064	47,433	178,346	294,459	34,734
<b>2020 Election Budget</b>	\$329,820	\$205,690	\$2,080,283	\$2,986,810	\$409,529

All five jurisdictions share concerns about how to best facilitate voter participation and limit exposure to coronavirus. All five jurisdictions spent all or most of the budgeted resources for all of 2020 on the extraordinary circumstances this Spring. If no plan is approved, it will leave communities like ours with no choice but to make tough decisions between health and the right to vote; between budget constraints and access to fundamental rights. The time that remains between now and the November Election provides an opportunity to plan for the highest possible voter turnouts in the safest possible ways.

We are collectively requesting a total of \$6,324,527 as summarized in Table 3 below and detailed extensively in the plan.

### **Review of the April 2020 Election**

The April 2020 election placed two sacred duties of cities in conflict: keeping our residents safe and administering free and fair elections. Since Wisconsin's elections are administered at the municipal level, each municipality was on its own to deal with these dynamics. Our Municipal Clerks and their staff are all remarkable public servants, who responded nimbly and effectively to marshal the resources needed to run these elections under exceedingly challenging circumstances. In this election, all five of our municipalities faced:

- Precipitous drop-offs of experienced poll workers;
- A scramble to procure enough PPE to keep polling locations clean and disinfected and to mitigate COVID-19 risk for election officials, poll workers, and voters;
- A never-before-seen increase in absentee ballot requests;
- High numbers of voters who struggled to properly submit required photo ID and/or provided insufficient certification of absentee ballot envelopes; and
- Voters who, understandably, were completely confused about the timeline and rules for voting in the midst of a pandemic and required considerable public outreach and individual hand-holding to ensure their right to vote.

See Table 2, below, for detailed data on all five municipalities' April 2020 absentee mail and in-person early voting experiences.

**Table 2: Summary of Municipalities' Experiences in April 2020 Election**

	Green Bay	Kenosha	Madison	Milwaukee	Racine
<b># of voters who requested absentee ballots for April election</b>	15,509	16,017	89,730	96,712	11,615
<b># of absentee ballots successfully cast in April</b>	11,928	13,144	77,677	76,362	9,570
<b># of absentee ballot requests unfulfilled due to insufficient photo ID</b>	Unknown	Unknown	1,840	2.5%	Estimated hundreds
<b># of absentee ballots rejected due to incomplete certification</b>	312	196	618	1,671	368
<b># of secure drop-boxes for absentee ballot return</b>	1	2	3	5	1
<b># of days of early voting</b>	12	10	19	14	13
<b>Use curbside voting for early voting?</b>	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
<b># of voters who voted in-person early absentee</b>	778	85	4,930	11,612	1,543
<b># of additional staff enlisted for election-related efforts</b>	86	60	225	95	20
<b>\$ spent on PPE</b>	\$2,122	\$13,000	\$6,305	Unknown	Unknown
<b># of polling locations</b>	2	10	66	5	14
<b>Use drive-thru or curbside voting on Election Day?</b>	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

## **Comprehensive Election Administration Needs for 2020**

In early June 2020, all five municipal clerks and their staff, with review and support from all five cities' Mayors and Mayoral staff, completed a detailed, multi-page template (attached) providing both data and information about the municipalities' election plans and needs. This Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan 2020 is based on that comprehensive information. All five of our municipalities recommend the following four strategies to ensure safe, fair, inclusive, secure, and professional elections in our communities for the remaining 2020 elections:

### **Recommendation I: Encourage and Increase Absentee Voting (By Mail and Early, In-Person)**

1. Provide assistance to help voters comply with absentee ballot requests & certification requirements
2. Utilize secure drop-boxes to facilitate return of absentee ballots
3. Deploy additional staff and/or technology improvements to expedite & improve accuracy of absentee ballot processing
4. Expand In-Person Early Voting (Including Curbside Voting)

### **Recommendation II: Dramatically Expand Strategic Voter Education & Outreach Efforts, Particularly to Historically Disenfranchised Residents**

### **Recommendation III: Launch Poll Worker Recruitment, Training & Safety Efforts**

### **Recommendation IV: Ensure Safe & Efficient Election Day Administration**

As detailed in this plan, our municipalities are requesting a total of \$6,324,567 to robustly, swiftly, comprehensively, and creatively implement these four strategic recommendations in each of our communities. That request is summarized as follows in Table 3, below, and detailed extensively in the remainder of this plan.

**Table 3: Summary of Resources Needed to Robustly Implement All Four Recommendations**

Recommendation	Green Bay	Kenosha	Madison	Milwaukee	Racine	Totals
<b>Encourage and Increase Absentee Voting By Mail and Early, In-Person</b>	\$277,000	\$455,239	\$548,500	\$998,500	\$293,600	<b>\$2,572,839</b>
<b>Dramatically Expand Strategic Voter Education &amp; Outreach Efforts</b>	\$215,000	\$58,000	\$175,000	\$280,000	\$337,000	<b>\$1,065,000</b>
<b>Launch Poll Worker Recruitment, Training &amp; Safety Efforts</b>	\$174,900	\$145,840	\$507,788	\$800,000	\$181,500	<b>\$1,810,028</b>
<b>Ensure Safe &amp; Efficient Election Day Administration</b>	\$426,500	\$203,700	\$40,500	\$76,000	\$130,000	<b>\$876,700</b>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$1,093,400</b>	<b>\$862,779</b>	<b>\$1,271,788</b>	<b>\$2,154,500</b>	<b>\$942,100</b>	<b>\$6,324,567</b>

## **Recommendation I: Encourage & Increase Absentee Voting By Mail and Early, In-Person**

Of all the things that need to be done to ensure access and safety at the polls, this is perhaps the most important and timely. It is time, resource, and labor intensive but results in the voter being able to vote by mail or from the relative safety of their car or at a socially distanced and carefully planned early voting site.

### **Overview of Absentee Voting in Wisconsin**

Before discussing our strategies and plans to encourage and increase absentee voting, both by mail and in-person, early voting, it's important to first understand the absentee voting context in Wisconsin.

There are two ways to vote early in Wisconsin: in-person and through the mail. Both are technically called "absentee voting," a phrase held over from a time when absentee voting required you to affirm that you were over 80, ill, or going to be out of the municipality on Election Day. Those requirements no longer exist in the statutes, and people can vote early, or absentee, for any reason. The April 2020 election saw dramatic increases in the number of absentee ballot requests over previous elections.

While for many regular voters, absentee voting - whether completed by mail or early, in-person - is a relatively easy process, our five cities understand that absentee voting does not work easily for all voters. Our communities of color, senior voters, low-income voters without reliable access to the internet, people with disabilities, and students all have legitimate concerns about the absentee voting process.

Voting absentee by mail has been complicated by the fairly recent imposition of state law requiring voters to provide an image of their valid photo ID prior to first requesting an absentee ballot. While this works relatively easily for voters who have valid photo IDs and the technology necessary to upload an image file of that valid ID into the state's myvote.wi.gov website, it does not work well or easily for other voters who do not have valid photo ID (complicated by closure of DMVs due to the pandemic), lack access to reliable internet (also complicated by coronavirus-related closures or reduced hours at libraries and community centers, leaving those residents without regular public internet access that our municipalities normally provide), those who don't have smart phones to take and upload photos, and those who need additional education about what constitutes a valid photo ID. (For example, countless voters in our municipalities attempted to submit "selfies" as valid photo ID. Explaining to them that this was not a valid form of photo ID and instructing them on how to properly submit valid ID took considerable staff time and resources.)

Once the absentee ballot is received, it must be completed correctly to be successfully cast, and there are numerous certification requirements on the absentee ballot envelope; if not correctly completed, the ballot could be rejected. Prior to this April's

election, very small numbers of voters had traditionally chosen to cast ballots by mail. Municipal clerks' offices simply were not prepared and do not have the staffing or technological resources needed to quickly process dramatically higher numbers of absentee ballot requests, troubleshoot problems, answer voter questions, provide information and to expedite the processing of thousands of received absentee ballots on Election Day.

In-person early absentee voting also poses challenges for voters and election administrators. While all of our communities had previously offered early voting locations and hours, April's election required election officials to creatively and quickly expand in-person early voting opportunities, including curbside voting, all while prioritizing necessary COVID-19 precautions.

As indicated by Table 4, below, all five of our municipalities are already experiencing dramatic increases in the number of voters requesting to vote absentee, compared to pre-pandemic, and must procure resources to enable voters in our communities to meaningfully access absentee voting.

**Table 4: Absentee Ballots in All Municipalities as of June 2020**

	Green Bay	Kenosha	Madison	Milwaukee	Racine
<b># of voters on permanent absentee list prior to 2/18/20</b>	1,628	1,856	2,062	6,252	613
<b># of voters on permanent absentee list as of 4/7/20</b>	4,306	3,469	8,665	23,374	2,684
<b># of voters who have already requested absentee ballots for August 2020</b>	5,162	9,450	36,092	53,438	3,389
<b># of voters who have already requested absentee ballots for November 2020</b>	4,859	9,123	34,164	50,446	3,204

We are committed to making voting accessible via mail, in-person prior to Election Day, and at the polls on Election Day. Particularly in the midst of a global pandemic when many voters are rightfully apprehensive about in-person voting, we want to ensure that voters in our communities know they have options and we are committed to conducting the necessary voter outreach and education to promote absentee voting and encourage higher percentages of our electors to vote absentee.

Increasing the number of voters who cast votes prior to Election Day minimizes the risk of spreading COVID-19 on Election Day from in-person contacts at our polling locations, and it reduces the chance for lines and delays in voting on Election Day.

The Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) has approved a proposal to mail all registered voters absentee ballot request forms, which allows our five communities to focus on helping voters overcome the barriers to successfully returning those forms so they can obtain, and then successfully submit, their completed absentee ballots. This measure will provide absentee request information directly to voters, alleviating the need for municipalities to expend the cost to send the mailing. However, it is unclear how this measure will affect the workload of municipal clerks. Although the WEC has directed that the forms be returned to the WEC for entry, municipal clerks must still review each record, process, mail, record receipt and canvass each absentee ballot.

All of our municipalities anticipate continued large increases in absentee voting based on the April 2020 trends. Milwaukee, for example, anticipates that 80% of residents will vote absentee by mail for both the August primary and the November general election.

All five cities have identified numerous barriers to successful absentee voting, including: voters facing numerous challenges to successfully submitting valid photo ID; voters needing assistance complying with absentee ballot certification requirements, including obtaining the required witness signature on the absentee ballot return envelope; the labor-intensive process faced by all of our clerks' offices of processing absentee ballot requests; and U.S. Postal Service errors and mail delays. All of these are challenges for our municipalities in normal elections, but they are all compounded by the coronavirus pandemic, and made exponentially more difficult by the unprecedented volume of absentee voting requests. This puts tremendous strain on municipal election clerks and their staff.

Our five cities share the desire to assist as many residents as possible with casting ballots before Election Day, serving as the greatest opportunity we have to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. We have identified several strategies to help voters in each of our communities overcome these barriers to successful absentee voting, both by mail and in-person early voting.

Overall, our five communities are requesting **\$2,572,839** in resources related to enabling our municipalities to overcome these particular barriers and ensure that our voters can meaningfully access absentee voting, both by mail and in-person early voting. These strategies and resource needs are broken down into four distinct component recommendations, within the overall umbrella of increasing and encouraging absentee voting:

- 1. Provide assistance to help voters comply with absentee ballot requests & certification requirements**
  - **Green Bay:** The City would like to employ bilingual LTE “voter navigators” (\$45,000) to help residents properly upload valid photo ID, complete their ballots and comply with certification requirements, and offer witness signatures. These voter navigators can assist voters prior to the elections and then also be trained and utilized as election inspectors. They would also like to utilize paid social media and local print and radio advertising to educate and direct voters in how to upload photo ID and how to request and complete absentee ballots. (\$2,000)  
**Total: \$47,000**
  - **Kenosha:** The City would like to have Clerk's staff train library staff on how to help residents request and complete absentee ballots, would like to produce (\$3,000) and mail (\$26,200) a bilingual absentee ballot instruction sheet with all absentee ballots to increase correctly completed and submitted ballots. The City would like to hire a trainer for seasonal election workers, volunteers and poll workers. This employee would also coordinate assignments to polling locations, the early driver up voting site, the Clerk's office for assistance in processing, data entry and filing of absentee requests and the Absentee Board of Canvassers (approximately \$50,000). The increase in absentee ballots due to COVID-19 has tremendously increased the workload of the department. In order to properly serve the citizens and voters additional LTE employees are needed (approximately \$175,000). **Total: \$254,200**
  - **Madison:** Plans to hold curbside “Get your ID on File” events with the Clerk this summer utilizing volunteers or paid poll workers (\$15,000) equipped with PPE (estimated \$5,000) and digital cameras (\$4,500) to capture voter ID images for voters who are unable to electronically submit their IDs to the Clerk's office. They also need large flags to draw attention to these curbside sites (\$4,000). Would also like mobile wifi hotspots and tablets for all of these sites (\$100,000) so voters could complete their voter registration and absentee requests all at once, without having to wait for staff in the Clerk's office to follow up on paper forms. (These mobile wifi hotspots, tablets, and flags, could all then be repurposed for early in-person voting closer to the election.) **Total: \$128,500**
  - **Milwaukee:** The City notes that the biggest obstacle to Milwaukee residents, particularly those in poverty, to applying for an absentee ballot in April was access to the internet and securing an image of their photo ID. To address this, the City will be promoting and utilizing Milwaukee Public Library branch staff (\$90,000 for both elections) for 3 weeks prior to each election to assist any potential absentee voters with applying, securing, and uploading images of their valid photo ID. **Total: \$90,000**
  - **Racine:** The City will recruit and promote (\$1,000), train (\$3,000), and employ paid Voter Ambassadors (\$8,000) who will be provided with both PPE and

supplies (\$4,000) and set up at the City's community centers to assist voters with all aspects of absentee ballot request, including photo ID compliance. Due to the increase of absentee mailed requests the City of Racine will need an additional 2 full time staff members in the Clerk's Office in order to have a reasonable turn-around time for absentee requests (\$100,000). Total: **\$116,000**.

**Total: \$635,700**

## **2. Utilize Secure Drop-Boxes to Facilitate Return of Absentee Ballots**

Our five communities all share a desire to expand voters' ability to easily return absentee ballots to the municipality without having to rely on the postal service, since, after April's election, many voters are (rightfully) apprehensive that putting their completed ballot in the mail does not guarantee it will be received and counted by the municipality by statutory deadlines. Voters also need to have confidence that they are returning their completed absentee ballots into secure containers that are not at risk of tampering. All five cities need resources to purchase additional secure drop-boxes and place them at key locations throughout their cities, including libraries, community centers, and other well-known places, to ensure that returning completed ballots is as secure and accessible to voters throughout our cities as possible.

- **Green Bay:** The City would like to add secure (security cameras \$15,000) ballot drop-boxes (approximately \$900 each) at a minimum of the transit center and two fire stations, but if funding were available would also install secure drop boxes at Green Bay's libraries, police community buildings, and potentially several other sites including major grocery stores, gas stations, University of Wisconsin Green Bay, and Northern Wisconsin Technical College, in addition to the one already in use at City Hall. **Total: \$50,000**
- **Kenosha:** The City currently has two drop-boxes that are checked throughout the day, and would like to install 4 additional internal security boxes at Kenosha libraries and the Kenosha Water Utility so that each side of town has easy access to ballot drop-boxes. **Total: \$40,000**
- **Madison:** The City would like to have one secure drop box for every 15,000 voters, or 12 drop boxes total (\$36,000). The City would also like to provide a potential absentee ballot witness at each drop box, utilizing social distancing and equipped with PPE (staff costs unknown): **Total: \$50,000**
- **Milwaukee:** The City would like to install secure 24-hour drop boxes at all 13 Milwaukee Public library branches, staffed with socially distanced volunteers to serve as witnesses. **Total: \$58,500**

- **Racine:** The City currently has one secured drop box for absentee ballots, and would like to have 3 additional drop boxes, each equipped with security cameras, to install at key locations around the City. **Total: \$18,000.**

**Total: \$216,500**

### **3. Deploy Additional Staff and/or Technology Improvements to Expedite & Improve Accuracy of Absentee Ballot Processing**

The process of assembling and mailing absentee ballots is labor-intensive, slow, and subject to human error. Absentee ballot requests must be approved and entered into the statewide system, labels must be printed and applied to envelopes, ballots must be initialed, folded, and inserted into the envelope along with instructions. Ballots must be logged when received back from the voter. Undeliverable ballots must be reviewed, reissued or canceled. When voters make mistakes on ballots the requests to reissue must be completed. These tasks are time-consuming and utilizing existing clerk's office staff pulls them away from all of the other service requests, phone answering, and tasks handled by busy municipal clerks' offices.

The tremendous increase in absentee ballot requests in April was unprecedented, and municipal clerks and their staff were unprepared for the volume. They responded remarkably well - particularly since many of their staff were, by late March and early April, working remotely or, at a minimum, all needing to adhere to social distancing and masking precautions when working together in the same room - but all five municipalities need additional resources to accurately and swiftly process absentee ballot requests.

- **Green Bay:** The City needs 45 additional staff to process absentee ballot requests before the election, to open and verify envelopes on Election Day, and insert them into the tabulators. After the election, staff are needed to enter new voter registrations and assist with all election certification tasks (\$140,000 for staffing) The City would also like to purchase a ballot opener and ballot folder to expedite processing (\$5,000). **Total: \$145,000.**
- **Kenosha:** The City needs resources for absentee ballot processing, to staff and process early, in-person absentee requests, and to answer voters' questions (approximately \$100,000). Additional workers are also needed to canvass absentee ballots (approximately \$11,000) **Total: \$111,000**
- **Madison:** Based on data from April, the City estimates it will need additional staffing (\$110,000) for hourly election clerks for the fall elections, and will incur

additional overtime costs (\$100,000) for staff processing of absentee ballots and other election-related tasks. **Total: \$210,000**

- **Milwaukee:** Given its tremendous volume of absentee ballot requests and processing tasks which far exceeds that of the other municipalities, Milwaukee would like to completely automate and expedite the assembly and mailing of requested absentee ballots. The City would like to purchase a high-speed, duplex printer, a top-of-the-line folding machine, and a high quality folding and inserting machine. This would reduce staff costs and eliminate the use of absentee labels, by enabling the City to print directly onto inner and outer envelopes. This would also allow the City to have a small 2D barcode that the inserter machine would be able to scan to ensure that the outer envelope is for the same voter; increasing quality controls. This automation would enable the City to eliminate the assembly delay no matter the volume of daily absentee requests, allowing experienced election workers and previously trained election temporary employees to be re-deployed to early voting sites as supervisors and lead workers. **Total: \$145,000**
- **Racine:** To process absentee ballot requests in April, the City estimates that it will need seven additional full-time employees to process fall election requests. These employees will be needed full-time for one month prior to the August Election (approximately \$17,000) and seven weeks prior to the November election (approximately \$30,000). **Total: \$47,000**

**Total: \$658,000**

#### **4. Expand In-Person Early Voting (Including Curbside Voting)**

For a variety of reasons, many voters in our municipalities do not want to vote by mail and prefer to vote in-person. As a result of the coronavirus, far more voters are interested in early, in-person absentee voting (EIPAV) than we've seen in previous elections, wishing to avoid lines or crowds on Election Day. All five municipalities would like to have resources to accommodate these early, in-person voters. Expanding access to early, in-person voting also will lessen lines at polling places on Election Day and allow for proper social distancing and other pandemic precautions to be uniformly implemented.

Curbside and drive-thru voting have been very popular with residents of our municipalities, particularly for those with health concerns who can remain in the cars and have a virtually contact-less voting process. For example, Milwaukee previously operated in-person early voting for one week leading up to the April election at three sites and then transitioned to one site of drive-thru voting. 11,612 cast ballots through these options: 5,571 via in-person and 6,041 at drive-thru, and these numbers represent a 46% increase over April 2016 "early voting" totals. However, it is slow-moving and

labor-intensive. Additionally, particularly in the larger cities among us, it requires law enforcement and traffic control assistance to help manage traffic.

- **Green Bay:** The City would like to expand and establish at least three EIPAV sites in trusted locations, ideally on the east (potentially UWGB) and west sides (potentially NWTC or an Oneida Nation facility) of the City, as well as at City Hall. The City is planning to offer early voting starting two weeks before each election, with several weekdays available until 6:30pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm. They would like to staff these early voting sites with election inspectors who are bilingual and would like to increase the salary rate for these bilingual election inspectors to assist with recruitment and retention, as well as in recognition of their important role at these sites. The City also will need to print additional ballots, signage, and materials to have available at these early voting sites. **Total: \$35,000.**
- **Kenosha:** The City plans to have one early voting location, at City Hall, and plans to hold early voting two weeks before the August election, with no weekend or evening hours planned, and 4 weeks before the November election, with access until 7pm two days/week and Saturday voting availability the week before the election. If City Hall is still closed to the public, they will explore offering early drive thru voting on City Hall property. Resources are needed for staffing (approximately \$40,000), PPE (\$1,050), signage (\$200), laptops, printers, and purchase of a large tent (\$8,789) to utilize for drive thru early voting. Staff could see voters' ID, print their label, hand them their ballot, and then collect the completed envelope. This would also allow staff to help voters properly do certification and provide witness signatures if necessary. The City could do this for one full week before elections. **Total \$50,039.**
- **Madison:** The City would like to provide 18 in-person absentee voting locations for the two weeks leading up to the August election, and for the four weeks leading up to the November election. Their original plan was to offer in-person absentee voting at all nine library locations, the City Clerk's Office, a city garage, Edgewood College, two Madison College locations, and four UW-Madison locations. Due to weather uncertainties, they will need to purchase and utilize tents (\$100,000) for the curbside voting locations in order to protect the ballots, staff, and equipment from getting wet and will also need large feather flags to identify the curbside voting sites. (Additional staff costs covered by the earlier question re. Absentee ballot processing.) The City would also like to get carts (\$60,000) for our ExpressVote accessible ballot marking devices so we can use the ExpressVote for curbside voting to normalize the use of ExpressVote to help voters with disabilities feel less segregated during the voting process. **Total: \$160,000.**
- **Milwaukee:** The City would like to set up 3 in-person early voting locations for two weeks prior to the August election (\$150,000) and 15 in-person early voting

locations and 1 drive-thru location, potentially at a central location like Miller Park, for four weeks prior to the November election (\$450,000). (Establishing this many EIPAV sites requires a significant investment in IT equipment, an additional ballotar printer, tents, signage, and traffic control assistance. Milwaukee would also like to offer evening and weekend early voting hours which would add additional costs for both August (\$30,000) and November (\$75,000). **Total: \$705,000.**

- **Racine:** The City would like to offer a total of 3 EIPAV satellite locations for one week prior to the August election, as well as offering in-person early voting - curbside, if City Hall is still closed to the public - at the Clerk's office for 2 weeks prior to the August election. For the November election, Racine would like to offer EIPAV at 4 satellite locations two weeks prior to the election and at the Clerk's office (again, potentially curbside) 6 weeks prior. The City would need to obtain PPE, tents, supplies and cover staff time and training (\$40,000). Racine would also like to have all satellite locations available for half-day voting the two Saturdays (\$17,000) and Sundays (\$17,000) prior to the November election, and the library and mall locations would be open until 8pm the week prior to the Election. Additional resources needed include one-time set-up fee per location (\$7,500), laptops and dymo printers (\$10,000), training (\$1,100), and signage (\$12,000.) As well, the City would like to host at least one drive-thru Voter Registration Day, where City Hall would be set up for residents to come get registered, curbside, and get their voting questions answered by Clerk's staff. Newly registered voters could also get assistance requesting absentee ballots for upcoming elections while they're there. (\$8,000) **Total: \$112,600**

**Total: \$1,062,639.00**

**Recommendation I Total for All Strategies to Encourage and Increase Absentee Voting by Mail and Early, In-Person: \$2,572,839.00**

## **Recommendation II: Dramatically Expand Voter & Community Education & Outreach, Particularly to Historically Disenfranchised Residents**

All five municipalities expressed strong and clear needs for resources to conduct voter outreach and education to their communities, with a particular emphasis on reaching voters of color, low-income voters without reliable access to internet, voters with disabilities, and voters whose primary language is not English. This outreach is particularly necessary given the voter confusion that ensued in the lead-up to the April election, and voters' concerns and questions about voting during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand that our communities of color do not necessarily trust the voting process, and that we need to work to earn that trust. We want to be transparent and open about what happens behind the scenes in elections, and what options are available for casting a ballot. We also want to make sure we are listening to groups that have historically been disenfranchised and groups that are facing obstacles with voting during this pandemic, and working with them to effectively respond to their concerns.

Voter outreach and education is also needed to encourage and explain new voter registration, and to encourage voters to verify and update their address or other voter registration information to do so prior to the Election. None of our communities have sufficient resources budgeted or available for the strategic, intentional, and creative outreach and education efforts that are needed in our communities over the summer and into the fall.

We all want our communities to have certainty about how the voting process works, trust in our election administration's accuracy, and current, accurate information on what options are available to vote safely in the midst of the pandemic. Significant resources are needed for all five municipalities to engage in robust and intentional voter education efforts to reduce confusion; encourage and facilitate new voter registration and registration updates; provide clear, accessible, and accurate information; address voters' understandable pandemic-related safety concerns; reassure voters of the security of our election administration; and, ultimately, reduce ballot errors and lost votes and enhance our residents' trust and confidence in our electoral process.

- **Green Bay:** Would like to reach voters and potential voters through a multi-prong strategy utilizing "every door direct mail," targeted mail, geo-fencing, billboards, radio, television, and streaming-service PSAs, digital advertising, and automated calls and texts (\$100,000 total). The City would also like to ensure that these efforts can be done in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali, since roughly 11% of households in the Green Bay area speak a language other than English. Ideally, the City would employ limited term communications staff or engage communications consultants (\$50,000) from August through the November election to design these communications and design and launch paid advertising on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, also in multiple languages. The City would also like to directly mail to residents who are believed to be eligible but not registered voters, approximately 20,000 residents. It would require both

considerable staff time to construct that list of residents and directly mail a professionally-designed piece (in multiple languages) to those voters. (\$50,000 total for staffing, design, printing, and postage). To assist new voters, the City would also like resources to help residents obtain required documents (i.e. birth certificates) which are needed to get a valid state ID needed for voting. These grant funds (\$15,000) would be distributed in partnership with key community organizations including churches, educational institutions, and organizations serving African immigrants, LatinX residents, and African Americans.

**Total: \$215,000**

- **Kenosha:** Would like to directly communicate to all Kenosha residents via professionally-designed targeted mail postcards that include information about the voter's polling location, how to register to vote, how to request an absentee ballot, and how to obtain additional information. The City would have these designed by a graphic designer, printed, and mailed (\$34,000). The City would also like resources for social media advertising, including on online media like Hulu, Spotify, and Pandora (\$10,000) and for targeted radio and print advertising (\$6,000) and large graphic posters (\$3,000) to display in low-income neighborhoods, on City buses, and at bus stations, and at libraries (\$5,000).

**Total: \$58,000**

- **Madison:** Would like to engage the City's media team to produce videos to introduce voters to the election process, voting options, and to explain the safety precautions taken at polls and early voting sites. These videos would then be shared in numerous ways, including through partner organizations and on the City's social media platforms. The City would also like to partner with community organizations and run ads on local Spanish-language radio, in the Spanish-language newspapers, on local hip hop radio stations, in African American-focused printed publications, and in online publications run by and for our communities of color (advertising total \$100,000). Additionally, the City has many poll workers who are from historically disenfranchised communities. The City would like to pay those poll workers (\$75,000) to conduct voter outreach and additional poll worker recruitment activities. **Total: \$175,000.**

- **Milwaukee:** Would like to partner with other City divisions to develop mailings and door hangers (\$10,000) that could accompany water bills, be distributed by the Department of Neighborhood Services, or hung on trash receptacles by sanitation staff. The City would also like to revamp current absentee voting instructions to be more visual, address issues specific to the pandemic such as securing a witness signature, prepare it in English and Spanish, and print 150,000 color copies (estimated total \$15,000). The Election Commission would also like to produce a short video (\$5,000) with visuals showing voters how to apply for an absentee ballot and how to correctly complete and return the ballot. Additionally, the Election Commission would like to hire a communications firm to prepare and implement a comprehensive voter outreach communications plan

(\$250,000). This communications effort would include numerous voter education ads and PSAs on radio, billboards, buses, with some using local celebrities like Milwaukee Bucks players. This communications effort would focus on appealing to a variety of communities within Milwaukee, including historically underrepresented communities such as LatinX and African Americans, and would include a specific focus on the re-enfranchisement of voters who are no longer on probation or parole for a felony. Additionally, this campaign would include an edgy but nonpartisan and tasteful communications campaign to harness the current protests' emphasis on inequity and ties that message to voting. The video, the ads, and the PSAs could all also be placed on social media, the Election Commission and City websites, and GOTV partner websites and social media. **Total: \$280,000**

- **Racine:** The City would like to retain a communications firm to design and implement a comprehensive voter outreach communications plan (\$80,000). This would include ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. The City would also like to rent billboards in key parts of the City (\$5,000) to place messages in Spanish to reach Spanish-speaking voters. The City would also like to do targeted outreach aimed at City residents with criminal records to encourage them to see if they are not eligible to vote; this outreach will be accomplished with the production, editing, and sharing of a YouTube video (\$2,000) specifically on this topic shared on the City's website, social media channels, and through community partners. Racine would also like to purchase a Mobile Voting Precinct so the City can travel around the City to community centers and strategically chosen partner locations and enable people to vote in this accessible (ADA-compliant), secure, and completely portable polling booth on wheels, an investment that the City will be able to use for years to come. (Estimated cost \$250,000). **Total: \$337,000**

**Recommendation II Total For All Strategies to Dramatically Expand Strategic Voter Education and Outreach Efforts, Particularly to Historically Disenfranchised Residents: \$1,065,000.00**

### **Recommendation III: Launch Poll Worker Recruitment, Training, and Safety Efforts**

The pandemic made conducting Election Day activities extremely challenging. Most poll workers in Wisconsin are retirees doing their civic duty to help facilitate the election. Given the increased risk for the elderly if exposed to COVID-19, many experienced poll workers opted out. Milwaukee had so many poll workers decline to serve that the City went from 180 polling locations to five polling locations. Green Bay, facing a similar exodus of poll workers, went down to two polling locations. Racine usually relies on nearly 190 poll workers for a spring election; only 25 of those experienced poll workers were under the age of 60.

As fears about the coronavirus increased in mid-late March and early April, poll workers in all five municipalities declined to work the election, leaving cities scrambling to quickly recruit enough bodies to keep polling locations open. All cities were appreciative of the last minute assignment of hundreds of Wisconsin National Guard members to assist with Election Day activities, and all of our cities re-assigned City staff from other departments to serve as poll workers and election officials and to assist with the myriad of tasks related to Election Day administration. The remainder of positions were staffed by high school students, college students, and members of the National Guard. Many of our poll workers had never worked an election before.

- **Green Bay:** The City needs to hire a total of 380 workers per election (total \$112,660). The City would like to pay poll workers more than they have previously received, to signify their importance in the process and to acknowledge the extra challenge it represents to serve as an election official during a pandemic. The City would like to increase poll worker salaries by 50% (additional \$56,330). All poll workers will be trained through the Wisconsin Elections Commission website and the City's own training manual (\$6,000).  
**Total: \$174,900**
- **Kenosha:** The City needs to hire 350 poll workers per election (\$100,000). They would like to offer hazard pay to increase pay to \$160/worker and \$220/chief inspectors (\$10,840). To aid in recruitment efforts, the City would like to hire a recruiter and liaison position for poll workers (\$35,000). **Total: \$145,840.**
- **Madison:** The City utilizes the election toolkit available through the MIT Technology Project to determine the staffing levels needed to ensure that voters will not have to wait in line for more than 15 minutes. In addition to the one Chief Inspector per polling location, Madison also has additional election officials who are certified as the Absentee Lead at each polling location. Madison estimates that if 75% of votes cast are absentee, the City will need 1,559 election officials at the polls in August. The City envisions a robust and strategic poll worker recruitment effort, focusing on people of color, high school students, and college students. The City would like to have resources for hazard pay for poll workers this fall at a rate comparable to what the U.S. Census is paying in the area

(\$369,788). The City has also found it challenging to convince facilities to host a polling location in the midst of a pandemic, and would like to provide each facility with a small amount of funds to compensate for their increased cleaning and sanitization costs (\$750/location, \$138,000 total). **Total: \$507,788**

- **Milwaukee:** The City plans to have 45 voting locations in August and to keep open as many of the normal 180 polling places as possible in November. August will require 3 chief inspectors per site and 20 election workers per site, for a total of 1200 election workers minimum and 150 chief inspectors. The City has a goal of recruiting 1,000 new election workers. The City would like to add an additional \$100 per worker in hazard pay to the poll workers' stipends of \$130 (\$460,000 additional for both elections) and \$100 hazard pay to chief inspector stipends of \$225 (\$87,750 additional for both elections). Additionally, the City of Milwaukee utilizes a Central Count of absentee ballots, which necessitates 15 chiefs and 200 election workers per election at Central Count (\$50,000/day for 2- days each election for a total of \$200,000). Total payroll for both elections will reach \$750,000 based upon these calculations. The City will launch a recruitment campaign for a new generation of election workers to sign up and be involved in their democracy, and hopes this effort can be included in the above request for resources for a marketing firm. Recruiting new and younger poll workers means that the Election Commission will need to innovate in election training. The Commission would like to produce polling place training videos (\$50,000) with live small-group, socially distanced discussions and Q&A sessions. These videos will augment existing training manuals. **Total: \$800,000**
- **Racine:** The City needs approximately 150 poll workers for August and 300 for November, in addition to 36 Chief Inspectors, and would like to pay all workers a \$100/election hazard pay (\$118,000 total payroll for both elections). City notes that its desire to have more early voting locations and hours is directly impacted by its ability to hire and train election officials. To that end, the City would like to launch a recruitment campaign that includes radio ads (\$1,000), ads on social media platforms (\$10,000), billboards in strategic City locations (\$5,000), and film videos for high school students in history/government classes (\$500). The City would also like to enlist a communication firm to: create a training video for election officials, develop an online quiz, detailed packets for election officials, and a PPE video filmed by a health professional about necessary COVID-19 precautions during all voting operations (\$22,000 total). Racine would also like to hire a liaison position to schedule, training and facilitate poll workers. (\$35,000) **Total: \$181,500.**

**Recommendation III Total for All Strategies to Launch Poll Worker Recruitment, Training and Safety Efforts: \$1,810,028.00**

#### **Recommendation IV: Ensure Safe & Efficient Election Day Administration**

It is no small task to mitigate risk of a lethal pandemic at all polling locations and throughout all required Election Day processing. Municipal clerks must ensure they have done everything possible to comply with public health guidelines and mitigate the risk of COVID-19 for all of the election officials, poll workers, observers, and voters. Our five municipalities are in need of numerous resources to both ensure seamless processing of voters on the upcoming Election Days, procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), disinfectant, and cleaning supplies to protect election officials and voters from the coronavirus, and to aid in processing of an expected high volume of absentee ballots. Additionally, as several of our municipalities move to add or expand drive-thru voting on Election Days, those expansions come with additional unbudgeted expenses for signage, tents, traffic control, publicity, and safety measures. All of our municipalities need resources to ensure that the remaining 2020 Election Days are administered seamlessly and safely.

- **Green Bay:** Green Bay would like to purchase 135 electronic poll books (\$2,100/each for a total of \$283,500) to reduce voter lines, facilitate Election Day Registrations and verification of photo ID. The City would also like a high speed tabulator (\$62,000) to count absentee ballots on Election Day, a ballot opener and ballot folder (\$5,000), and additional staff to process absentee ballots on Election Day (\$5,000). The City also needs masks, gloves, gowns, hair nets, face shields (\$15,000), cough/sneeze guards (\$43,000), and disinfectant supplies (\$3,000). **Total: \$426,500**
- **Kenosha:** The City would like to purchase automatic hand sanitizer dispensers for all polling locations (\$14,500) as well as PPE (gloves, masks, disinfectant, etc.) for all poll workers and voters (\$15,200). Kenosha would also like to be able to offer elderly residents and people with disabilities who wish to vote in person on Election Day two-way transportation, utilizing a local organization such as Care-A-Van (\$2,000). The City also needs resources for technology improvements to include a ballot opener, a ballot folder, 12 additional laptops and dymo printers, and high-speed scanner tabulators (\$172,000 total) to expedite election day processing and administration. **Total: \$203,700**
- **Madison:** The City needs hand sanitizer for all poll workers and voters, disinfectant spray, plexi-glass shields to allow poll workers to split the poll books, face shields for curbside election officials, and face masks for all poll workers and observers (\$20,000) as well as renting additional space to safely and accurately prepare all supplies and practice social distancing at the public test of election equipment (\$20,000). If the new voter registration form is not translated by the state into both Spanish and Hmong, Madison plans to translate the form (\$500). **Total: \$40,500**

- **Milwaukee:** The City will be purchasing 400 plexiglass barriers (\$55,000) for election workers at all polling location receiving and registration tables. Additionally, the Milwaukee Election Commission will need to acquire 400 face shields for workers not staffed behind plexiglass (\$4,000), gloves for all poll workers (\$3,000), masks on hand for election workers and members of the public (\$5,000), hand sanitizer (\$2,000) and disinfectant (\$2,000). Additionally, since Milwaukee also plans to offer curbside voting as an option at all polling places, updated, larger, more visible signage is necessary (\$5,000). **Total: \$76,000**
- **Racine:** Racine plans to issue all 36 wards its own PPE supply box which will each include masks, cleaning supplies, pens for each voter, gloves, hand sanitizer, safety vests, goggles, etc. (\$16,000). The City also needs large signs to direct and inform voters printed in English and Spanish (\$3,000). Additionally, the City would like to deploy a team of paid trained EDR Specialists for each polling location (\$10,000, including hourly pay, training expenses, and office supplies). As well, Racine would like iPads with cellular signal for each polling location to be able to easily verify voters' registration status and ward (\$16,000). The City would like to equip all wards with Badger Books (\$85,000); Racine began using electronic poll books in the February 2020 election and has found they dramatically increase and facilitate EDR, verification of voters' photo ID, expedite election processes, and reduce human error. **Total: \$130,000**

**Recommendation IV Total for All Strategies to Ensure Safe & Efficient Election Day Administration: \$876,700.00**

## Conclusion

As Mayors in Wisconsin's five largest cities, we are committed to working collaboratively and innovatively to ensure that all of our residents can safely exercise their right to vote in 2020's remaining elections in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The April 2020 election placed two of our most sacred duties in conflict: keeping our residents safe and administering free, fair, and inclusive elections. This Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan 2020 represents a remarkable and creative comprehensive plan, submitted collaboratively by all five of our cities. With sufficient resources, all five municipalities will swiftly, efficiently, and effectively implement the recommended strategies described in this plan, to ensure safe, fair, inclusive, secure, and professional elections in all of our communities this year.